

Waste goes private

Dhaka City Corporation hands over waste management of eight wards to four private companies for a year as DCC workers have failed to manage the 4000 tons of solid waste produced daily by the city.

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) turned to privatization in eight wards of the city for managing solid waste and city cleanliness from May 15, 2003.

Seven thousand workers are employed by DCC, to clean about 4000 tons of solid waste everyday. But allegations have been made that most of the workers remain absent in the field though they are paid wages on a regular basis. Due to this unsolved problem, DCC has handed over to four private organizations the waste management services for the eight wards at Uttara, Gulshan, Baridhara, Banani and Tejgaon for one year.

DCC has divided the eight wards among Poribesh Unnayan Forum for Uttara, LN Corporation for Tajgaon, Bangladesh Integrated Environment Development Forum for Gulshan and

Baridhara, and Rhythm for Nikunjo2 in Banani.

According to a week-long survey of Poribesh Unnayan Forum, prior to their participation in the tender, 20 to 25 workers were found on the street everyday whereas 100 workers were employed for street-sweeping in Ward 1 of Uttara.

DCC will certainly gain in terms of cost benefit from this venture.

"The cost of cleaning for eight wards was Taka 6.5 crore by engaging DCC workers but utilizing the service of private organizations the cost would come down to Taka 3.75 crore per year", said the Chief Town-Planner of DCC, Tapan Kumar Das Gupta.

"We have got the job of Ward 1 of Uttara for Taka 72 Lakhs, which is Taka 20 lakhs less than DCC cost," said Nurul Huda Zaidee of Poribesh Unnayan Forum.

The open DCC containers on

the street-side secondary dumping places have become a major source of environmental pollution. The private organizations responsible for the cleanliness of the city have decided to get rid of the dumping containers of DCC from their wards due to the corruption of the transport workers. The DCC trucks did not pick up the containers everyday, alleged the private organizations.

There are also allegations that DCC transport workers benefit from the money billed for extra petrol. The transport workers used to take one trip to the only dumping place at Matuail and billed the DCC transport department for three or four trips.

DCC workers are also allegedly creating problems for the private organizations as they dump waste in the wards handed over to the private organizations. There is a problem with the coordination among the engineering,

transport and conservancy departments of DCC.

"The corruption of the truck-drivers is the problem of transport department but we are trying to solve this problem", said the Chief Conservancy Officer, Sohel Farouqui.

To solve the cleanliness problem, the conservancy department has taken several other steps like providing ID cards and green aprons to the workers, ensuring cleanliness of the VIP roads, around the containers, and dumping waste from the street side containers to Matuail before day break.

DCC will replace the current 400 containers with mobile wheeled containers and 'litter bins' at commercial places for public use, said the chief of conservancy.



This DCC rubbish container spills its contents just fifty metres from the mayor's own residence.

Dishing up a satellite storm

CITY CORRESPONDENT

For city dwellers starved for entertainment, cable TV is one major source of enjoyment. However due to the autocratic attitude of some cable operators, the subscribers are not getting the service they deserve.

There are at least four lakh satellite channel subscribers in Dhaka city. According to the Dhaka City Corporation, there are more than a hundred cable operators in the city but only twenty-two of them have licenses. These illegal operators have been in business for the last decade or so. Their nature of work means that the government is being deprived of a large amount in revenue everyday.

There are no specific laws in cable business. That is why the situation is always chaotic. Distributors and operators for their own convenience fix the rate of subscription and raise it whenever the please.

The president of Cable Operators Association of Bangladesh (COAB) Mir-e-Akter claims that they have to increase the subscription because the number and cost of pay-channels have gone

up and with it the rate of VAT too. But none of cable operators are showing more than 8-10 pay-channels despite taking an increased amount of money from the residents. There are as many as 33 pay-channels available for the city's subscribers.

Abul Khair Litu, the chairman of Nation Wide Communication, one of the two channel distributors of the city, argued that the operators were violating the rights of subscribers. "As VAT they pay less than Tk 60-100 per month. Only the operators of Gulshan and Baridhara pay in the region of Tk 140. Besides, the operators regularly earn extra money from illegal connections but they don't share this with the distributors."

Although the Ministry of Information, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Bangladesh Bank, Bangladesh Television (BTV), National Board of Revenue, DCC etc. all are connected in some capacity or the other with the cable industry, there is no coordination between these establishments.

Taking advantage of this confusion, unscrupulous operators are continuing to deprive the subscribers of proper service.

Open up, say *bismillah*



In the 'dentist's chair' - treatment on the streets is cheap but not very cheerful!

CITY CORRESPONDENT

It is a hot day in Old Dhaka. A vendor sits against an iron fence with his head tilted back and his eyes closed. His sweat is no doubt due to the Bangladesh weather, but very probably increased by the hands struggling against his teeth and tracing his gumline with an instrument that looks too much like a worn scalpel.

Johnny, apparently the salesman/spokesperson, calls the process underway "scaling." That means that for Tk 100, his coworker Faizal is cleaning this customer's cracked and browned teeth.

This is quite a contrast to the white teeth being displayed by the happy mouth on the business' sign that hangs from the stand's tin roof. It advertises teeth pulled out, fixed, or capped by gold. It is a curious indication of this business' credibility in an area inhabited by 20 other businesses. With all that competition, it is good service and word of mouth that keep a business running long enough to have a sign this worn.

Below the sign is everything a person might need to do such operations. There are immaculate teeth, both individual and full sets, waiting to be installed. They come all the way from dental supply companies in Japan, China, and India. A full mouth of new teeth will cost Tk 3000.

If one desires teeth taken out, it will run from Tk 50 to 500 depending on how many are to be

removed. The other procedures are accomplished using an assortment of scissors, tweezers, tooth pliers, and mouth trays. Like the sign, they have lost their luster - old, and not clean. Further discomforting is the absence of any method of sterilization.

Ashad, the medicine man, holds up one time use and insists this is all they use, there is a regular multi-use needle on the table. They look equally ready to administer the Cormicine, Simplex, Lignocaine, or Lidocaine from the vials exhibited to the customers who wish to feel no pain regardless of the state of the needle or the accompanying tools.

While this seems extremely problematic in the spreading of disease, it has not been. Dr. Neaz Ahmad Chowdhury, an associate professor with the Dhaka Medical and Dental College - the high authority in certifying these businesses - has seen them in action. He is not aware of any problems resulting from what he admits is very unhygienic.

"Maybe it is a gift from God to the people of this poor country,"

Those who do come for service are among the very poor who cannot afford to pay much higher prices of office bound dental business. Ashad attributes this to a general lack of education about dental hygiene, combined with the high rate of pan and tobacco consumption.

He says, "Our country is very, very poor. In this situation, it's the best they can get."

City soon to see stars

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Star-gazers and planet-watchers who have been eagerly awaiting the completion of the Dhaka Novo Theatre, the city's first modern planetarium, will have to wait a while longer. It will be another four or five months before the project is up and running.

The project has suffered several setbacks and delays since its inception.

The present government had already once suspended work on the planetarium - after 80 per cent of construction was completed saying it was 'unproductive.' The ministry of works was directed to postpone further work on the Taka 133 crore project in November 2001.

The government finally gave the go-ahead eight months ago to resume work on the planetarium, which should have been opened this month.

The Novo Theatre, which will

allow the public and students of science to study the night sky of both the earth's hemispheres, was originally conceived by the BNP government in 1995. At the time the project was estimated at a cost of Taka 52 crore, and was approved by the parliamentary standing committee on science and technology.

When Awami League came into office in 1996, the theatre was renamed after Bangubhandu and the budget was more than doubled to a total

of Taka 134 crore. The Public Works Department (PWD) began structural work on the Bangabandhu Novo Theatre at a site beside the Army Museum near Bijo Sarani. Equipment for the planetarium was procured from the Japanese Goto Optical Manufacturing Company, at a cost of Taka 43.19 crore, with a view to opening the theatre in October 1998.

But work was not completed in time, due to initial delays in design and in procuring suitable land for the project. Further delays occurred with the present government. Shortly after an American team installed the US-imported, Taka 5 crore aluminium dome of the planetarium, the BNP government deemed the project too expensive and unproductive.

However, everything appears to be back on track now, and sensitive optical equipment, from the US and Japan, is waiting now to be installed.

"Everything is OK here. Now we just need some time to install the rest of the equipment. The equipment will be installed by the Japanese team, which will be scheduled to arrive in the country next month," project officials said.

The many planetariums in neighbouring countries of the region are popular attractions for the public. India has 29, including four in West Bengal and one in Kolkata Science City, while Pakistan has three. These planetariums generate income by charging admission, as will the Novo Theatre.



Dhaka Novo Theatre, the city's first modern planetarium, will finally open this year.

telephonenumber, cabs & train timing

HEALTH

- Hospitals**
Heart
 National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 9122560-59
Burn
 Dhaka Medical College Hospital Burn Unit-8626812-6
Cancer
 National Cancer Institute- 80149148826561-65
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9
Diabetes
 (DIABEM) Research Hospital (BIRDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50
Mother & Child Care
 Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62
 Azimpur Mother & Child Health

- Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980
Eye
 Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315
 National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807
Dental
 Dental College 9002035
Orthopaedics
 National Orthopaedics (Pangu) Hospital- 9114075, 9112150
General
 Dhaka Medical College Hospital- 8626812-6
 Holy Family Hospital- 83111731-25
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550
 -4, 8614545-9
 Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,
 Shamarita Hospital- 9131901
 Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800,

- 9122560-69
 Salimullah Medical Collage Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6
Cholera Research Hospital (ICDDR)- 8811751-60
Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135
Blood Bank
 Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
 Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
 Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022
 Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9
Eye Bank
 Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040
Ambulance Service-
 Fire Service & Civil Defence Ambulance 9555555, 9556666-7, 9567734, Fire Services Siddique Bazar (HQ) 9556667,
 Mohammadpur 9112078,
 Khilgaon 7218329, Mirpur

- 9001055, Tongi 9801070, Demra 7400111, Postagola 7410771, Narayanganj 9715644, Sadarghat 7119759,
 Mirpur 10 Circle 9002269,
 9001055, Mirpur TVG Complex 9001189, Narayanganj Port 9715365,
 Hajiganj (N Ganj) 9715531, Mondalpara (N. Ganj River) 9712015, N. Gan Bander 9712095, Dhaka EPZ (Savar) 7701444, Markajul Al Islami 9127867, Holy Family Hospital 8311721-5.
Ambulances For Dead Body
 Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,
 Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

UTILITY

- POST OFFICES**
 Dhaka General (GPO) 9555531
 Banani 9894658
 Banga Bhaban 9563811
 Bashabo 7217970
 Cantonment 9860018
 Dhaka Polytechnic 9110043
 Dhaka University 9672053
 Gulshan 9894970
 Jigatola 8626018
 Mirpur 9002797
 Mohammadpur 8626356
 New Market 9330432
 Shantinagar 9114859
 Tejgaon
Electricity
 Electricity Complex- PDB- 9566061-5, 9560170-9
 Electricity Complex (DESA)- 8616737-43, 8617626
 DESCO- 8123138-40
 Complaints (Rural Electrification Board, Dhaka)- 8916424-8
Gas
 Titas Gas Exchange (Emergency)- 9563667-8
 Kawrnabazar-8112135-42
 Mirpur- 8014132-3

- Mohammadpur- 9117215, 9113903
 Mohakhali- 9884741, 9885922, 8824993
 Motijheel-9667612
WASA
 WASA (PABX)- 8117829-31
 Mirpur- 9000519
 Mohammadpur- 8120192
 Fakirapool-9115343
 Asad Gate- 8917492
 Uttara- 9559142,
 Segunbagicha- 7316348
 Pagla- 8113900-39

TAXI CAB

- Yellow Cab**
 Comfort 881710-4
 Navana 9558065
 Salida 9344477, 0171620881
 Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191
 Cab One 7113282-3
 Nihon 8624741-2
 Orion 9347277
 Anudip 8125285 and 8127611
Capital 9352847
Union 8130485
Kool 0171826731
Black Cab
 Cab Ex 9358401
 Cabline 8321162
JBS Cab 019364575
Sajan 018126036
Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611
Cab One 7113282-3
Palki 0171052500

- Cab I** 7113282
Jatri 0171540074
Nipun 9572277
R-Cab 8914782
Star Cab 9571919
Shihab 018202477 & 018228675
KGN 8620011

RAIN TIMING

- Subarna Express** Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am Reaches Chittagong at 2:55 pm
Mahanagar Godhuli Leaves Dhaka at 3:05 pm Reaches Chittagong at 9:11 pm
Turna Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm Reaches Chittagong at 7:05 am
Parabat Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:30 am Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
Joyantika Express Leaves Dhaka at 12:30 pm Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
Upaban Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:30 pm Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Tista Express Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
Ekata Express Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:55
Upakul Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:00 am Reaches Noakhali at 1:35 pm
Padma Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

SPECIAL NOTICE

US Embassy's New Telephone Number
 Effective June 16, the US Embassy switchboard will have a new telephone number 885-5500. The Embassy fax number will not change (882-3744). The telephone number of the US Embassy American Center on Road 27, Banani